

Issue #78

Dec. 28, 1985

STUFF

MURD'RING MINISTERS is a gamezine dedicated to the play of postal DIPLOMACY and MACHIAVELLI. Subscriptions are \$5.50/12 issues. MM is published occasionally by Ron Brown, 1528 El Sereno Pl., Bakersfield, CA 93304. Phone: (805) 834-8409. There are no game openings. The current games are being run by flyer to players only except for when an occasion issue of MM is published with game results -- like this one!

There seems to be a bit of a misunderstanding or confusion regarding the future of MM. This is not the last issue. I'm not sure just which one will be. I will continue publishing the zine (on an erratic schedule) at least until the last current game concludes. At that point, we'll see. I may just fold it then. I may continue a bit after that with all-reading type issues. I may pick up an orphaned game. Who knows? I certainly don't. . .

Lot of news to mull over this time so prepare for quite a bit of STUFF. . .

Nominations are now open for the 1985 NIXON AWARD. See details on page 3.

Bill Quinn, 301 Conros Drive, Conroe, TX 77301 the Boardman Number Custodian, has recently announced that he would be reeigning the post. The latest EVERYTHING (#66), Bill announced that he would probably appoint "two publisher-players with impressive backgrounds" (two) have volunteered to take over the job of BNC, as his assistant BNCs. He wants to discuss this possibility with them and makes an announcement by Feb. 1, 1986. Good luck with this shift of responsibilities, Bill. By the way, please remember that it is customary to enclose a \$1 contribution with each Boardman Number requested for each new game.

The West Coast Co-Director of the US Orphan Service, Keith Sherwood, is resigning. A replacement is needed. Anyone who is interested should write to Keith Sherwood, 4824 Muir, San Diego, CA 92107. It would also be a good idea to contact the other Co-Director, Jim Burgess, 100 Holden St., Providence, RI 02908-5731, and find out just what kind of activities the USOS Directors engage in. Jim, by the way, publishes YES, VIRGINIA THERE IS A SANTA CLAUS!, a zine he uses in rehousing games through the Orphan Service.

Gary Coughlan is running a "Contest For Free Issues of EUROPA EXPRESS" in his latest EE (#50). Gary has concocted a horrendous quiz divided into 6 categories. The deadline is Jan. 24th. If you score the most points you win 10 EEs. Second place gets 7 issues while 3rd takes 5 issues. Gary Coughlan, 4614 Martha Cole Lane, Memphis, TN 38118 publishes EE always full of interesting reading.

The recent EVERYTHINGS (#65 & 66) included a few winners of note. The above mentioned BNC Bill Quinn showed he can play the game as well by winning with Italy in 1982HU. Long-time hobby friend (and first NIXON winner) Honest Al Pearson is stilling plunging his razor sharp blade into helpless backsides as witnessed by the fact he just won with Germany in 1980AL! And another long-time MM friend, Don Swartz won with England in 1980CR! Congratulations to the winners!

(Con'd next pg.)

MORE STUFF

Word is out that Terry Tallman's NORTH SEA/TH WEST GEORGE, late for quits an extended period now, will be folding after its next (and last) issue. Terry says this final NSWG will be out very soon.

THE ZINE DIRECTORY, which I plugged in the last issue, is undergoing changes in management. Roy Henricks will remain as publisher, but editing duties will be done by Simon Billeness, 61A Park Ave., Albany, NY 12202. Simon ran a similar operation in England entitled 20 YEARS ON. The "new" ZD will come out thrice a year. Simon will also be setting up "The American Zine Bank". Those desiring samples of DIP zines should send Simon a large envelope and \$1-\$2 and he'll send you samples of various zines. Best wishes on these worthy projects!

DIPLOMACY WORLD is being scrapped, overhauled, and re-issued under a new publisher. Larry Peery will be the new publisher. Under Rod Walker's guidance, DW went bankrupt; if you had a subscription, consider it a lost investment. However, Larry is taking the mammoth project of resuscitating this huge behemoth, and if anyone can do it, he's the guy for it. If you would like to start all over again with DIPLOMACY WORLD, then order from DIPLOMACY WORLD, IDS, Box 8416, San Diego, CA 92102. Subscriptions are only \$12.00/year (4 issues). I'm sure that Larry will do a good job in establishing a regular publishing schedule -- something that no one's been able to do with DW in quite awhile. The Winter 1986 issue (#41) is scheduled for a Jan. 15th publication date. If you would like to write something for DW, the deadline for submissions for the Spring 1986 issue is April 1, 1986. Larry asks that we send him news items, new zine info, announcements, hobby services info, etc. for publication. Order your DW sub today!

Speaking of DIPLOMACY WORLD, an apparent DW#40 appeared in my mailbox. At first glance, I thought it was the real thing! I was kinda expecting to get the most recent issue of DW when I had asked Rod Walker to switch some money I had given him for a gamefee that never materialized over to a sub to DW. I was expecting a DW to arrive anyway so at first I was taken in by it. It proved to be a very fancy and well done fake of DW by Bruce Linsey! It was one of the best fakes I've ever seen. Congrats to Bruce!

Apparently, a few folks were angered by Bruce's fake. They probably would find fault with Bruce for anything he did, so I wouldn't pay it any mind if I were you.

I announced last time (way back in August) that the BNC, Bill Quinn was going to establish a hobby-wide standby list he was calling the "Universal Standby List". It seems that good old Elmer Hinton Jr., publisher of KAISSE, FOUNDATION, etc., the self-appointed head of the Gamemasters Publishers Association (and I believe its only member) had put forth a similar idea about a month or so before Bill began his. Elmer's list is called the "Postal Locator". This is a listing of people who specifically want standby positions in games, by titles of choice. They may be contacted for an instant response to an NMRing player or may be send a sample of your zine, to see if they wish to join it and your standby list. At any rate, Elmer apparently was very offended that Bill "copied" his idea. Bill stated in EVERYTHING#65, "I see no reason for me to duplicate his ((Hinton's)) efforts. Players willing to standby for GM's who need them should contact Elmer Hinton Jr., 20 Almont St, Nashua, NH 03060. I apologize to Mr. Hinton for any bitterness I may have caused him."

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"For Brutus is an honorable man;
S are they all, all honorable men."

JULIUS CAESAR, III, ii, 88.



SPECIAL Dare NIXON AWARD



Well, let me say this about that . . .



NOMINATIONS are now open for the 1985 NIXON AWARD. The Nixon is an award given annually to the Hobby's "Biggest Liar" of the year. If you have someone in mind, please feel free to nominate them for this year's honor. All you need do is write a short essay explaining just why you feel your candidate deserves the coveted Award. This is a writing contest - the winner is chosen based on the best written nomination. All nominations must be in by FEB. 1, 1986. The winner will be announced in Feb. Fubbers: please help spread the word! Thanks!



SHORT AND SWEET

After dinner, my new employers practiced disco dancing in front of the TV.



My favorite coach. ↑

Your favorite coach. →



unexpected pleasure



THE GAMES!!!!

1983HX WINTER 1905 (GM Note: Germany owns Venice, not Italy as reported last time. Therefore, Germany is -2, not -3; Italy +1, not +2.)
 GM Note: English F STP(nc)-H omitted last time.)

1983HX WINTER 1905

England- Builds F EDI, A LPL, A LON

Germany- Disbands A Tya, A Pru

Italy- NBR! Plays 1 short

Russia- A Tya-r-OTB; Builds F SEV & A MOS

Turkey- Builds F ANK

1983HX SPRING 1906 MISSING POPE IS THE KEY TO PRESENT POWER STRUGGLE IN EUROPE!!
 England (Hugh): F HOL-Kie; F BEL-h; A Par-BUR; A Lon-BRE; F ENG-e-A Lon-Bre;
 F MAO-H; A Lpl-YOR; F Edi-NTH; F StP(nc)-H.
 Germany (Gorham): F Bot-SWE; F Lvn-BAL; F Bal-DEN; A MUN-Kie; A SIL-Mun; A Bur-PIC.
 Italy (Kelly): NMR! A TRI, F ROM, F WES, F NAF, A SPA, F POR - all H.
 Russia (Gardner): A WAR-H; A MOS-s-A War; A Boh-VIE; A GAL-Bud; A UKR-Rum; F SEV-Bla.
 Turkey (Torkelson): A Apu-ALB; F ION-e-A Apu-Alb; F ADR-Tri; A SER-Bud; A BUL-Rum;
F ANK-Bla.

Fall 1906 due 1/30/86.

*Would Dan Kuszynski, 403 Real Rd., #32, Bakersfield, CA 93309 please standby for Italy?
 Thanks to Mike Coburn whose standby orders were not needed.

BERLIN: A GENERAL NOTICE:

Trust is a certain factor in life that is most important if we can work with others and live a generally good life, and this applies across the board to all factors of life. Now in DIPLOMACY we have now three kinds of attack, two are general and expected: the open attack; the regular stab; and the Hugh-attack. Now, the Hugh-attack is where you are called on the telephone and asked to work out the moves together since we have a "close alliance", then when the position of the units are known he attacks you! This is not your regular stab, hence the name "Hugh-attack"!

Just remember guys, that if Hugh can do it once to one guy he can do it to another and so where can he be trusted????? Would any of you be his ally in the future? Would any of you trust him?? Wouldn't you always have it in the back of your mind, that he is known for his breach of faith and treacherous actions?????

Enough said, his own actions and the way he did it tell it ALL!!!!!!

ST. PETERSBURG: The Tsar: I have no official statement to make at this time, I will contact each of you privately.

CONSTANTINOPLE: The Sultan awoke from his long winter . . . nap with fire one his kerchief and dung on his eay.

SWITZERLAND: Will the real Mr. Kelly please make his presence known to a willing admirer. Subject; up in the air/ topic; a new ally/ General Discussion; Limey Beans, INC.

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1984CH WINTER 1903 (GM Note: There was some confusion about the SC Chart in the last game report and one error to correct. I didn't cross out some of the lost SCs on some of your results. Most all of you saw and noted what it should have been. Also, Ankara was not credited to Russia; Turkey is (4) 0 - Russia is (5)-2.)
 (GM Note: The report read "Russ. F StP-Nwy" should have read "Russ. F Swe-Nwy/d-r-FIN; A Mos-STP.)

1984CH WINTER 1903

Austria- Builds A BUD

England- Builds F LON

France- Builds F BRE

Italy- Builds F NAP

Germany- No Adj

Russia- F Swe-r-FIN, F Nwy-r-SKA, A Rum-r-GAL

Disbands A StP & F Ank

Turkey- No Adj

1984CH SPRING 1904 continues on the next page . . .

1984CH (Con'd)

1984CH SPRING 1904 GAME TAKES WIDE OPEN TURN AS KNIVES FLY ON ALL SIDES!!

Austria (Johnson): A Vie-TYA; F Tri-ADR; A Bud-TRI; A SER-s-A Rum; A RUM-s-A Ser.
 England (Bumpas): F Lon-ENG; F NTH-s-F Lon-Eng; A Nwg-STP; F Nwg-BAR; F DEN-s-
French A Kie/OTM/.
 France (Torkelson): A MAR-Pis; F Wes-LYO; F MAO-SPA(sc); F Eng-Bsl/d/-r-Pic,Bre,Iri,
Wal,OTB; A HOL-Bel; A KIE-Ber; A Bur-MUN.
 Germany (Coburn): F Swe-H/d/-r-Bot,Bal,Ska,Nwy,OTB; A BER-s-A Mun-Sil; A Mun-Sil/d/-
r-Ruh,OTB.
 Italy (Gorham): A VEN-Pis; F Tun-WES; F Nap-ION; F TYS-s-F Nap-Ion.
 Russia (Schilling): F Ska-SWE; F FIN-s-F Ska-Swe; A SIL-s-Franch A Bur-Mun; A WAR-s-
 A Sil; A Gal-BOH.
 Turkey (Hugh): A BUL-s-Austrian A Bul/NSU/; F GRE-s-A Bul; F Con-BLA; F Aeg-CON.
 Fall 1904 due 1/30/85.

VIENNA-ROME: Remember that Stab earlier in this game? I do.

PARIS: Bimbeau orders the execution of the courier who failed his fall assignment.

GERMANY-RUSSIA: 1) You don't look very well yourself.

2) I didn't write because I'm attacking you!

BAKERSFIELD-GERMANY: Oh yeah? What are you attacking with?

* * * * *

1983CS FALL 1907 - SUMMER 1907 DRAW FAILS!!

French A Sil-r-BOH; Turkish A Tri-r-SER; Turk F Nap-r-APU

1983CS FALL 1907 BRITISH MARINES SWARM INTO RUSSIA WHILE TURK SULTAN ORDERS A STRATEGIC
 WITHDRAWAL!!

Austria (Hager): A Vis-BUD; A TRI-s-A Vis-Bud; A Rom-APU;
 England (Johnson): A StP-MOS; A Nwy-STP; A Kie-LVN; F BAL-c-A Kis-Lvn; F BAR-H;
 F NWG-H; F NTH-H; A BEL-H; F Dsn-KIE.
 France (Rowell): A BER-H; A MUN-s-A Ber; A Boh-GAL; A Tya-VIE; A VEN-s-Austrian A Tri;
 A PIE-s-A Ven; F NAP-s-Austrian A Rom-Apu; F TYS-s-F Tun-Ion;
 F Tun-ION.
 Italy (CD): F ALB-H.
 Russia (Gorham): A SIL-Ber; A PRU-s-A Sil-Ber.
 Turkey (Pitas): A Gal-UKR; A Rum-SEV; A Ser-RUM; A Con-ANK; A Bul-CON; F Aeg-SMY;
 F Ion-AEG; F Apu-Ion/a/; F ADR-H.

Winter 1907 AND Spring 1908 due 1/30/85.

1983CS 1907 Supply Center Chart

Austria- Bud, Y/1, Rom, TRI.....	(3) 0
England- Home, Bsl, Hol, Den, Nwy, Swe, StP, KIE, MOS.....	(11)+2
France- Home, Spa, Por, Mun, Kie, Tun, Vsn, VIE, NAP, BER.....	(12)+3
Germany- Y/1.....	(0) OUT
Italy- Grs.....	(1) 0
Russia- War.....	(1)-1
Turkey- Homs, Bul, Sev, Rum, Ser, NAP, T/1.....	(7)-1

1093CS Press-

LONDON-CONSTANTINOPLE: The continuing machinations and duplicity of the Turkish Government have not escaped our notice.

CONSTANTINOPLE-WORLD: After the treachery of the Spring of 1907, the government of Turkey has been forced into a desperate position. To prevent further needless bloodshed, we surrender all captured territory to the victorious French and English forces.

* * * * *

"I have bought
 Golden opinions from all sorts of
 people."

1983CR SUMMER 1907 English A Lpl-r-OTB/NRR! /

1983CR FALL 1907 ONLY GROWTH BELONGS TO KAISER AS SULTAN TAKES CHRISTMAS VACATION!

England (Rodriguez): F WAL-H; F MAO-H; F SPA(sc)-H.

France (Gorham): A MAR-Bur; F Eng-Lon/d/-r-Pic, Iri, Bre, OTB; F Iri-Lpl/NSU/.

Germany (Kuszynski): A GAS-Mar; A MUN-Bur; F Bel-ENG; F LON-s-F Bel-Eng; F Hol-NTH; A Lpl-EDI; F Cly-NAT; A PIE-s-A Tya; A TYA-e-A Boh-Vie; A GAL-e-A Boh-Vie; A Boh-VIE; A Ber-SIL; A UKR-s-A Gal; A MOS-e-Ruesian F Sev.

Italy (Johneon): A VEN-s-Turkish A Tri-Tya/NSO/; A ROM-s-A Ven; F Nap-APU.

Ruesia (CD): F SEV-H.

Turkey (Schiwartz)*: NMR! F LYO, F WES, F TUN, F ADR, A TRI, A SER, A BUD, A RUM, F BLA, A ARM - all H.

Winter 1907 AND Spring 1908 due 1/30/86. There is a call for a concession to Germany & Turk. please vote with your next orders remembering that NVR='Yes' vote! Also . . . see below*.

*Would Bill Hugh, 8211 San Angelo #A5, Huntington Beach, CA 92647 please standby for Turkey?

1983CR 1907 Supply Center Chart

England- Eng, Por, Spa, Lpl.....(3) 0 (was one short)

France- Bre, Mar.....(2) 0

Germany- Home, Hol, Den, Bel, Swe, Nwy, StP, Moe, War, Vie, Par, Lon, EDI....(15)+1

Italy- Home.....(3) 0

Russia- Sev.....(1) 0

Turkey- Home, Bul, Rum, Bud, Ser, Tri, Gre, Tun.....(10) 0

* There is also a call for a solitaire concession to Germany. Please vote on both the concession to Germany and the two way draw (G/T) with your next orders.

MACHIAVELLI NO. 52 SPRING 1457 - Expendituree: Venice - Order A (Croatia) & E Piombino. MACH. NO. 52 SPRING 1457 TWO BEHEMOTHS POSITION THEMSELVES FOR THE FINAL STRUGGLE!!

Milan (Albrecht): A1 Genoa-S-Savoy; A2 Como-A-Turin; A3 Trent-S-Carinthia; A4 Savoy-S-Saluzzo; A5 Austria-A-Hungary; A6 Swiee-A-Avignon*; A7 Turin-A-Saluzzo; A8 Milan-S-Carinthia; A9 Tyrolea-A-Carinthia; A10 Pavia-A-Fornova; A11 Cremona-A-Brescia. (15d in Treasury)

Venice (Coburn): A1 Lucca-B-Lucca; A2 Croatia-A-Dalmatia; A3 Modena-A-Mantua; A4 Bosnia-S-Dalmatia; A5 Vicenza-S-Verona; A6 Padua-A-Verona; A7 Treviso-A-Friuli; G1 Piombino-C-A8 Piombino; F1 UppAdr-S-Ancona; F2 Romagna-A-Ancona. (1d in Treasury).

Naples (Heflin): A1 Urbino-H; A2 Bari-H; F1 EastTyrSea-H; F3 Meseina-H. (13d in Treasury).

Turke (Palter): A1 Herzegovina-S-Bosnia; A2 Dalmatia-A-Boenia; F1 LowAdr-A-UppAdr; F2 Palermo-S-Ion; F3 Naplee-A-Salerno; F4 BayofTun-S-WesMed; F5 Tun-A-WesMed. (2d in Treasury).

Papacy (Patejak): A1 Perugia-A-Urbino; A3 Rome-H; F1 Ancona-A-Romagna. (15d in Treasury)

France (CD): F1 WesTys-H; A2 Provence-H. (18d in Treasury)

* Milanese A6 in Avignon starves to death at the end of this Spring turn, Avignon being a famined province.

Summer 1457 due 1/30/86.

Austria has been conquered by Milan and is out of the game.

Get thoes moves in on time! (Please?)

READERS' RHETORICAL REPLIES

((Last issue back in August I published a bunch of comments people had made regarding the '1983AY Affair' - that game being declared irregular. Those comments in turn have generated a few more. These letters which follow were written for the most part from late August through early October. As far as I know, all opinions, facts, etc. are still pertinent. - RB))

((from Steve Langley)) 8/16/85

Dear Ron,

Juer got MM next to laet on my sub. I'm undergoing mixed feelings about DIP just now and will wait until December to decide on a reeub. Still, I thought I'd reepond to a couple of things and share a thought.

I'd like to say how much I appreciate Ron (Can) Brown's lumping me with Bob Olsen and Kathy Byrne. He didn't seem to mean it ae a compliment, but eince they are two of the niceet people I know it etill feele good to be numbered in that company.

The real reaeon I'm writing is about the comments on the Orphan Service. I don't think Jim Burgesse or Keith Sherwood either have or even think they have the power to move a game from one GM to another. All they can do ie offer euch a eervice to playere who desore euch a move. If the players don't want to move neither Jim nor Keith can force them to do eo.

If a new GM is found and a player objects for whatever reason, I'm just as sure that Jim and Keith would try to find an acceptable GM. To suggest otherwise is doing them a disservice. They have a fairly thnklese job ae it is.

Beet,

Steve

((Thanks for taking the time to share your thoughts, Steve. It's always good to hear from you. I agree with you about Kathy and Bob. Although I don't agree with everything they do, I still count them ae good friends. I was able to meet Kathy and John briefly thile they were on their California Trip and they are really nice people. Bob hae always been at the top of my list of postal DIP friende - ae you well know. The comments I made about the Orphan Service was because that wae the impreseion I wae getting from Jim Burgesse. We later etraightened the mieunderetstanding out, and what you state in your letter about the 'powere' of the Orphan Service is true. This ie what I previously believed, but was confused by some of the veiled threats of how the game would be re-housed if Player X was right in his complaints. Anyhow, it's all been cleared up. I thank you for pointing this out -- and for reminding ue all that the Orphan Service ie a rather thankless job and we should appreciate the work he epends on this important Hobby Custodial Service. - RB))

((from Gary Coughlan)) 8/16/85

Dear Ron,

I would like to have this printed in the very next MURD'RING MINISTERS. In MM#77, pg. 11 (Aug. 1, 1985), you printed a letter from me, written over a year ago, about the situation of 1983AY.

I stand totally by what I wrote in that letter except for the laet sentence when I said of Dan Stafford "what a baby." Everything else I had written was mostly opinions of other people but that personal comment about Dan was wrong of me and I do not believe it to be true and I would like to apologize to Dan for what I wrote. I'm eending him a complete copy of my letter in MM#77 and also of this letter that I'm writing now. Thank you.

Til later . . .

Gary L. Coughlan

RRR (Con'd)

((Sorry 'bout that, Gary. I understand that Dan took no offense; he probably was intelligent enough to figure out that the letter was written some time ago, as I had stated in the intro to that series of comments about 1983AY that I had been "saving" them up for publication all at once. As I told Gary before, I should have edited that from his letter, realizing that it was an off-handed remark made long before. Anyway, I'm glad Dan was mature enough not to get angry over it. - RB))

((from Conrad von Metzke)) 8/28

Dear Ron,

In MM#77 in last week, and I've been looking for a chance to write. Finally found one. Same problem you've got, but since both the little beasts are at school just now, I'm grabbing a few minutes.

Yes, we have a "partial trade", as you put it. You send whatever whenever you publish, and I'll work out something fair in exchange. (It so happens that this will involve all issues of COSTA, but that's just personal whim. Besides, for sheer content yours is worth at least two of mine, and except for your excruciatingly bad typing/proofing, the content and level of interest are superior.)

You're welcome to print anything in this letter in your next issue, but it's not really intended as a letter to the editor. I just add a few things I thought worth saying.

On the irregularity of 1983AY, I must start by confessing that I have never had much use for rating systems in the first place, and have therefore, never been particularly eager to 'irregularize' a game except for fairly massive, and open-and-shut, causes.

Rod Walker is correct that an irregular designation is not necessarily a Scarlet Letter, but because it is so often taken that way, it needs to be used quite sparingly. In the present case, I find that I agree with you that it was not used sparingly enough.

Mark Berch tells you that his opinion was based on having considered both factors complained of together, and that he might have advised otherwise given only one of the items. The problem with this reasoning is that there was only one 'problem area' in the first place; as far as I'm concerned, since the matter of the standby player never actually had an effect on the game, it is irrelevant. So I'd say that any ruling with mere potential disorders contributing to it, is faulty on its face. Bruce Linsey calls it a "Red Herring". That's putting it mildly . . .

As to the question of how the countries were assigned, again to quote Bruce (for whom I am gaining more respect every time I read something of his), "random is random". Some words in English are absolutes: Infinite, eternal, perfect, absolute (as a matter of fact), and suchlike. And: RANDOM. When I select countries by 'random draw', I very often do not do it myself; most recently, for instance, I had my three-year-old son do it. I've had my wife do it. I've had my previous wife do it. I once had the landlord do it. And, yes, I've had players do it . . . I've also held random draws and then "adjusted" them, for instance, to prevent Joe Schmoe from getting saddled with Austria three times running. So I guess all my games are irregular too?

And who usually gets hurt the most when one of these games is given an "unclean" bill of health? The players . . . how sweet. They don't do anything, therefore they pay the penalty. Maybe I should send Kathy Byrne my next two speeding tickets, eh?

My feeling is that it would be best if the BNC did not have the authority to make designations of irregularity; set up an independent three-person commission and require unanimous consent. Far easier said than done, but it's a pleasant ideal.

Or let it be established that the decisions of the BNC may always be appealed

((Con'd next pg.))

RRR (con'd)

to an Ombudsperson mutually agreed upon. Or something, but in any case I agree that the BNC needs to have some reins attached.

Comments on the matter of orphan games. In the first place, the functionary dispensing these games is properly known by the title Orphan Games Honcho, and I do wish the incumbent would pay more attention to that . . .

Now. It should be obvious that any time all players decide to pull up stakes, move to another journal, and continue, they can. All they have to do is do it. It gets trickier when only some players are actively seeking a move. There, the OGH may be in a position to help. When I had the job, I conducted quite a few votes on moving games. The rules were that the game would move only if nobody voted against. (That is, a vote not received didn't count; this allowed for abstentions and for the possibility that one or more 'active' players had in fact dropped out.) If it is true that the current OGH can move games more or less on whim, then it's about time we put some fetters on that one, too.

One problem Stan needs to allow for in making his proposals, ie that there are quite often more orphans than places to put them. It is frequently not possible to be terribly selective. In principle, the 'veto' idea has merit, but it needs to be realized that this could very well result in the game not being picked up at all.

In one sense, it was easier in my day. Back then, almost all hobby publishers traded magazines as a matter of course; as OGH and publisher of COSTAGUANA, I got them all, could see who was reliable and accurate and who was sleazy. Also, at the time I was in a position to pick up a few games myself, and when faced with only sleazies as choices, I kept the games in my own journals. Even at that, I goofed at times; I remember rehousing one game three times, and several twice. But in general I did fairly well, and it is mainly due to the fact that I had near-total communication with the hobby. (It didn't hurt that I was also BNC at the time). Given the current state of fragmented contact, my luxury is gone.

So the 'veto' idea becomes a coin with two heads. When games are plentiful and orphans are few, it's an excellent scheme. Given the reverse, though, don't be surprised if use of a veto results in abandonment.

Did I get carried away? Well, what the hell . . . I enjoyed it. I write too few letters any more.

Hope all is well, I look forward to the next MM, and if you were serious about joining a COSTA game, one's open now and I'd love to have you.

Regards,
Conrad

((Thank you very much for taking the time to write, Conrad.

I'm glad we share the same views concerning 1983AY. I too, am baffled by Mark Berch's "logic". It's only because of both factors - the standby call and the assignment of countries - Mark thinks it's a case for irregularity. And the one situation concerning the standby never even came to play. Well, everyone knows how I feel about the whole thing. Thanks for voicing your opinion, Conrad. And in my opinion, a very sensible one. - RB))

((from Bruce Linsey))

9/9

Dear Ron,

I've been wanting to write ever since MM#77 came out. I'm sorry to hear about your impending fold, but I understand your reasons. But, please know that for me, MM will always remain a fond memory - a truly great hobby publication put out by one of the nicest people in DIPLOMACY. I'll treasure the few issues that remain.

By the way my apartment # is 3, not E. ((Sorry 'bout that!))

Well, you and I both agree that Kathy Byrne's decision on 1983AY was wrong. What

((Con'd on next pg.))

RRR (Con'd)

really galled me the most about the whole thing was not the decision itself (which was, if not correct in my opinion, at least reasonable), but the fact that the injured parties had no appeal right whatsoever. And face it, Rod Walker's attempts to downplay the "irregular" label notwithstanding, there were injured parties.

This incident leads me into a topic that's been bouncing around in my mind for a long time. I think we should have an "appeal board" for situations like this. Nothing fancy, mind you -- I dislike hobby organizations generally - but, say, two people to back up the BNC's decisions. Here's how it works: if someone wishes to challenge an "irregular" ruling (and let's face it, BNCs are human too), he appeals to the two-member board. If either member of the board, after reviewing all the arguments, agrees with the BNC, then the ruling stands. But if both members disagree, then the ruling is overturned. What do you think?

Mind you, I don't think the '83AY ruling would have been reversed -- it's too much of a borderline situation. But at least the option would be there for people like you who feel they've been treated unfairly.

That said, there are two areas in which I'd like to disagree with you. I really wish you'd reconsider your decision never to GM another game if this is indeed the reason for that decision. You are letting one negative experience overshadow all the fun and enjoyment that you and others have shared because of your GMing. Are you really willing to let that happen? Think of the many hours of entertainment you have provided to dozens of people over the years. (I ought to know, having been one of them). Does this one incident cancel out all of that? I'd certainly hope not!

Second point: I didn't agree with your remark that Bill Quinn's decision might be influenced by his relationship with Kathy Byrne -- that was unfair to Bill. It is entirely within the realm of possibility that Bill would view '83AY as irregular because he genuinely feels that it was. (Note that Walker and Berch both did . . .) Moreover, I'm not even sure that Bill has the power to overturn Kathy's ruling. (If he does have this authority, then I too would urge him to do so -- but he is not obligated, and doesn't deserve to be criticized if he doesn't do it.)

But enough. I do think you are taking this whole thing too hard. Yes, I think the ruling was wrong, but all of us get dumped on at some point in our lives. The good ol' Main Minister that I've come to know and love has always been cheerful enough to bounce back. I expect this time will be no exception. Prove me right, eh?

On another topic entirely, I agree thoroughly with Ron Brown's (of Canda) denunciation of the feud tactics employed by people like Byrne, Olsen, and Langley. Those three are ruthless liars. For example, Byrne invented a story last year that I wrote her pre-teen daughter a "sick letter", adding that "I can prove what I am saying. And that proof is available to anyone." So, there was no proof -- people asked, and Kathy has totally ignored them. That's because Kathy never had any "proof" -- she made up the "sick Letter" story entirely. Olsen is a liar, too. For instance, he has written to at least three publishers that I sent Dick Martin a note gloating that Kathy Byrne would be "out of the hobby in two weeks". Well, one of the recipients of Olsen's letter decided to - horrors! - ask Olsen to prove it by producing the letter. Whereupon Olsen clammed up, not having any proof. The reason? He made up the story, purely for the purpose of maliciously hurting my reputation. Or take Langley. He printed a story that Mark Berch is a thief, giving an account of his mutual sub history with Berch. Lo, Berch then produced a sub check to MAGUS that Langley had neglected to account for, and proved his story false. But this didn't matter to Langley, whose regard for facts is not as strong as his desire to throw mud at Berch (and me, and Steve Hutton).

So I agree with Ron that the tactics of these three dishonest hobbyists, and others like them (Tallman, Caruso, and Martin, for instance), ought to be protested and condemned. And there are more and more voices being raised against them, and I'm glad.

Best always,
Brux

((Con'd on pg. 12))



Larry Peery, always known as a master of the "hard sell", was seen as the ideal candidate for resuscitating DIP WORLD. Shown above is Larry's newest Ad Poster for the campaign.



No victory dance after this game! This is Coach Brown and the troops on our way after the game to congratulate the victorious Ataccadero Greyhounds! (They won 14-5).



Marshal Jacques Pervert was late for the last Napoleonics battle. Shown above is the blonde wench who held him over and made him late. It seems she was intrigued with Pervert's "sword".

When Bill Quinn, current BNC was asked by a prominent publisher, "But what do you think of the traditional limits of power on the Boardman Number Custodianship?", he replied . . .



Pictured above is an old photo from a past DipCon. On the right is ye olde Main Minister. In the middle is the hapless victim of a future backstab. On the left is the self-appointed "Master of DIP". (His Chrome-Dome should identify him to all!)



NAPOLEON



RRR (Con'd from pg.10)

((Thanks for writing, Bruce. I appreciate the kind words at the beginning of your letter. You agree with Conrad von Metzke on the idea of some sort of appeal to the BNC's decisions. I believe there are others who feel the same, also. I don't know how one would go about initiating that sort of thing. Any ideas? Of course, it sounds terrific to me. As far as your first disagreement with me over not performing any future GMing duties, I feel this way. Gamesmastering a postal game is something that requires some time, care, and work. The only way it is worthwhile to the person doing it is if he is having fun. If it's not fun to do, then one shouldn't fool around to GMing. The past eight years, I have enjoyed GMing games of postal DIP. I've started and completed a score of games. And over all this time, I never had anyone tell me they could control who I allowed to play in MY zine. Naturally, the traditional and sensible 3 players in the same locale means local game = "irregular" - restriction has always been in effect. But over all and throughout all DIPdom, two local players in the same game meant nothing. If one or two of my local gaming buddies wanted to play (even in the same game), it was no big deal. The Hobby was fun. I could have fun having my local friends play. All was just fine, then . . . From out of the blue comes our new BNC (not so new anymore) Bill Quinn wishing, "... that GM's not have two or more local players." Although it is not listed in the list of circumstances which cause a game to be ruled irregular (this list was first published in E#53 and recently reprinted in E#65), the 8th and final circumstance is the rather ominous, "Other circumstances that I may feel may affect the game's rateability," may very well get a game declared irregular simply because two players are local. "Furthermore," Bill continues in E#65, "I suggest that there be no player local to the GM." So, with the way the system is now set up, I am being threatened not to even allow my local gaming friends into any of my games. If our Hobby has come to this kind of dictatorial powers, then I'm afraid I'm not ready or willing to Gamesmaster any more games. If things change, perhaps I'll change my decision. But with it standing as it now does, no thanks. I may pick up an orphan or two, who knows? Maybe I'll just stick to GMing postal MACHIAVELLI where there is no postal gaming ~~bureaucracy~~ to step in and tell me who can and can't play in the game. As for your second disagreement - my remark about Bill perhaps being influenced by Kathy. I only meant that it was my impression that Bill was heavily influenced by his predecessor, Kathy. In the last EVERYTHING (#66), I think Bill even said something to that effect. As far as my appeal to the BNC to consider changing Kathy's declaration of Irregularity, I had received NO word or reply from Bill at all. Only his remark in E#65, "There continues to be much ado about nothing concerning local games." Ironic of him to use the title of my subzine, huh? "Despite the hysterics of a small 'zine type publisher, it is not my policy . . . etc." So, I'm a small 'zine type publisher in the eyes of Bill, and hysterical to boot. Certainly not worthy of a direct answer. But I'm sure that in Bill's eyes, 83AY is Irregular and that's it. Well, anyway, I hope that you can see my point of view enough to understand that it's all so ridiculous and really insignificant . . . By the way, Bruce asked that I publish a statement from Pat Conlon confirming the accuracy of this past year's RUNESTONE POLL. I won't publish it in this issue for lack of space, and I'm pretty sure that everyone has probably seen it by now in a zine somewhere. Anyhow, suffice it to say that it is pretty darn obvious that the Poll was done honestly and accurately and that Bruce did an absolutely fabulous job in running the thing. It's an excellent job for Bruce. May he bring us many more in the future! One last thing, Bruce. It's about what you said concerning Bob Olsen, Kathy Byrne, and Steve Langley. Calling a DIPLOMACY player a "liar" isn't really that big an accusation! (Ha!) - RB))

((Con'd on next pg.))

"I do perceive here a divided duty."

OTHELLO, I, iii, 158.

RRR (Con'd)

((from Ron Brown))

9/23

Dear Ron,

Regarding 1983AY I am glad to see there is finally some sort of dialogue going on. I was beginning to feel like a voice crying in the wilderness. There are, I feel, two central questions which I have been asking for the past year, for which I have yet to receive any satisfactory answer:

- 1) Where is the rule that a GM must be present for country assignments documented?
- 2) To whom does one appeal if he disagrees with a BNC decision?

I suspect the reason I have not received an answer to the first question is that the answer is it is NOT documented. I've been active in this hobby since 1979 and have been receiving EVERYTHING for that entire period, yet have seen nothing remotely resembling this rule being applied. I've read and re-read the rule book and see no reference, however, oblique, regarding requirements for presence at a country drawing. In fact, according to the rule book, a GM is an optional function in any case.

So, I am convinced that this ruling is grossly unfair. How could Mike possibly have known he was breaking a rule when he asked for help in GMing his first game? And, with this precedent, how can any GM know when he is unwittingly breaking a BNC rule? As a GM myself, I am baffled.

Just looking at EVERYTHING#46, I see a case where someone was both a player and a GM in the same game (1979KH). Now that strikes me as highly irregular, but I see no star underneath the report. I was always under the impression that such a situation was grounds for Irregularity -- in fact, that's what I thought the irregular label was for -- but I now see I was mistaken. In the future I will feel certain that I can sign up as a player in games where I am GM without fear of retribution via the BNC.

So, just what the H are the rules? Before 1983AY I thought I knew. Now I find I'm hopelessly ignorant.

I suspect that what has happened is that the rules which were laid out in an issue of EVERYTHING several years ago (I forget which issue and cannot locate it) were ignored by Kathy who ruled on the basis of emotion, rather than fact. If a game appeared to be unusual in some respect, then it must be irregular, especially if someone like Mark Berch agrees. This situation is intolerable. If the BNC can come up with new rules on the basis of a gut feeling that something is not quite 'normal', then we are ruled by anarchy and the whole BNC function is absurd. If she did base her decision on a rule, then, again, where is this rule codified?

Why the hell will no one listen to that crucial point? This is potentially far more damaging to the hobby than some tiff between Bruce Linsey and Kathy Byrne.

And Bill's responses, which, from what I've seen, have been limited to, "I support Kathy's ruling" are not helpful at all. What RULE is he supporting? The rule of anarchy or the rule of the rule book and the BNC Guidelines?

Regarding the second point, apparently there is no one to whom one can appeal BNC decisions.

The easy answer is that we've never needed any procedure before, so there wasn't one. But I disagree.

1980AC was ruled Irregular on the basis that the GM was inconsistent in his stand-by policy. I bitched about that for years and finally, within the past year, I began to get credit for it in the ratings. But I'm sure I never would have if I hadn't kept reminding people that the rule was not formulated until after the game was over. It is a just rule and I think it still applies (though I'm not sure of anything to do with the BNC any more). I've no quarrel with the rule, as I do in this case. But I fought on the principle of the unfairness of applying rules retroactively. But to win that point I had to keep at it, hounding people like Rod Walker to the point where they probably got fed up with hearing about it and gave the credit.

((Con'd next pg.))

RRR (Con'd)

. . . And the only difference between my getting credit for 1980AC and other games where players felt cheated is that I don't give up when an injustice has been committed. I know of at least one case where a player gave up on the entire hobby in disgust (over 1980AC, in fact) because he felt so helpless in the face of "Custodial rulings." And, I am sure there are many others who we never hear about who just sling their zines in the garbage until their subs expire.

One irony of the Irregular label itself, is that it's the GM who commits the sin but the player who pays the price.

Anyhow, there should be a way to have cases reviewed. When I received Bruce's letter (which I'm sure you'll print) I had already been thinking along the lines of a review committee, save I was thinking more of a committee of five, of which four must agree before a game can be labelled. This would not be a court of appeal, but rather the first step. If a player still disagreed he could go to a "higher court" composed of even more individuals to review the entire case where a simple majority could reverse the first decision. The idea is to make it HARD to label a game Irregular because the hobby loses not only bodies, but respect, every time that label is stuck on a game that a player has invested years in.

I know, I know, the Rod Walkers are forever telling me that the Irregular label doesn't mean anything. In that case, why have it at all? Secondly, I guess they've never been robbed of their efforts in a game because their GM goofed, or because of the mind-bending distorted "reasonings" of a hobby "elder."

No matter how many "custodians" agree with Kathy's ruling, it is still wrong and unjust. No matter how clever the arguments, it is still wrong and unjust. And I'll never shut up about the issue because it is wrong and unjust.

Best wishes,
Ron

((Thanks for expressing your opinions very clearly and orderly, Ron. You make several excellent points -- I think I've mentioned them previously myself. I, too, think it grossly unfair that a NEW rule has been instituted (without informing anyone) and 83AY is penalized retroactively. You're right! How could Mike have known that would make his game Irregular? I didn't have any idea it would and I have been heavily involved in the Hobby since 1977!! That is my major gripe. Apparently the rule Bill is supporting is the one I previously alledged to: "Other circumstances that I feel may affect the game's rateability (for example, the "anonymous standby policy")." This gives one person (the BNC) quite a bit of authority and the freedom to step in and "interpret" things that "might have happened" and punish players unfairly by declaring their game Irregular. You, also, feel some sort of committee, or panel, or whatever be established to review these BNC decisions. Once again, any ideas out there in DIPLOMACY land, how does one initiate such an action? Mark Berch, I'm sure you have an opinion on this. As for how this is affecting our rookie GM, attempting to GM his first game? As you know his game reports have been mailed pretty erratic of late. It is possible he has decided to, as your friend in 1980AC, abandon the game in disgust. His latest game report is two months late, so I'm not sure what the deal is. - RB))

((from Mark Berch))

10/4

Dear Ron Brown,

Thanx for printing my letter in MM#77. The issue provided a lot of interesting reading. I have several points to make and respond to.

First off, I entirely agree with Rod's commending you on your response to a decision you disagreed with. I don't see anything wrong with how you've responded. So far as I'm concerned, you can rail against the decision as long as you like, and we can continue to discuss it as long as anyone has anything interesting to say on the topic. Thus, I completely disagree with Kathy's remarks to you on this topic.

((Con'd next pg.))

RRR (Con'd)

Second, since there appears to be some confusion, let me repeat that this was Kathy's decision, not anyone else's. Kathy asked me and Rod for advice. Neither of us were among her close chums, and both of us have been known to, shall we say, think things through differently than she. In other words, Kathy did not pick out two yes men.

Third, I want to emphasize that there were only two grounds for my advice. If only one of them had occurred, I'm not certain how I would have advised, but together, I felt that there was a good case. As it happened, both of the actions fell into the same category: Improper GM/player contacts. I have never said, nor do I need to say, that either action alone was enough.

Fourth, Ron (Canada) Brown raises a legitimate point when he calls the ruling arbitrary, and not in violation of any specific written rule. It was, of necessity, arbitrary. It was the first time that any such game had arisen, so of course there was no previous rule to rely upon. The first time a game was called irregular because a player had played two different positions at different times in the game, that decision was arbitrary. There have never been fixed rules to state what is and what is not irregular, and I don't think such a set of rules would be possible, especially since these situations are not cut and dried. There are dozens of special situations that can arise for the first time, and thus a decision will of necessity be arbitrary.

- 1) A player resigns from game A because of what he considers a serious GMing irregularity. GM retaliates by expelling the player from game B. Is game B irregular?
- 2) GM married a player in the course of the game, or she moves in with him during the game. Is it irregular?
- 3) Two players, with the consent of all other players and the GM, swap counties. A player, who had already been eliminated by then complains that the game is irregular.
- 4) A publisher plays in his own zine, using a GGM. But he uses an alias, so the GGM doesn't realize they are the same people, and the GGM discusses the game with the publisher, thus unwittingly sending info to the player.
- 5) In a GM/player dispute, a GM allows his decision to go to binding arbitration. The arbitrator selected is another player in the game, who over-rules the GM. A third player objects to the BNC . . .

Now, how are you going to devise a set of rules to anticipate in advance all these odd situations (and their variations. In #5, for example, perhaps the player picked the ombudsman, perhaps the GM). And I can easily create a dozen more. The BNC just isn't going to have a rule on the books saying, "A player cannot be an Ombudsman" until it finally comes up, unless he wants to drive himself crazy trying to anticipate everything which can come up. And lacking a specific rule to cover that circumstance, it will be a judgement call and of necessity arbitrary. It's like trying to have a complete set of House Rules; it can't be done. In fact, it's a lot harder for a BNC. Kathy had no precedent for this particular set of circumstances. And thus a decision for or against Stafford's complaint would automatically be arbitrary.

Fifth, the idea is raised of having such decisions appealable. I have stated on many occasions that I think that people in hobby service positions must be free to do the job as they see fit. You can raise a hue and cry, you can try to talk them out of it, but the person must be allowed to do the job as they think best. Setting up a mechanism to over-rule the person is the exact opposite; it means they cannot do as they see proper. And this is only the tip of the iceberg. If a decision on whether or not the game is irregular can be overruled, why not other decisions made by other people in hobby service positions. For example:

1. Runestone Poll Custodian decides to permit telephone votes.
2. Miller Number Custodian decides that a certain game is not a Dippy variant but another game entirely.
3. Zine Directory Head decides that all zines are to be listed, regardless of whether the publisher submits any information.
4. Runestone Poll Custodian picks his successor.
5. BNC decides that all electronic mail games are automatically local, even if people aren't in the same city.
6. BNC rules that Ham Radio DIPLOMACY is a variant, rather than a regular game.

((Con'd next pg.))

RRR (Con'd)

7. Admin Committee of the DipCon Society picks Robert Sacks as the GM for DipCon.

And on and on. Each of these decisions, real or fictional, is 1) likely to be controversial 2) likely to affect other people. In fact, most will affect far more people than the 83AY decision. If we are going to make one category of decisions appealable, why not make all of them? Once you set up a mechanism for overruling the person, then he really can't do the job as he thinks best. And people are much less likely to take on a job under those circumstances.

Sixth, Ron (Canada) Brown wonders if an 82KA incident wasn't just as bad. He the GM, was having dinner with player Jack, when player Blair handed in his orders for 82KA: "Jack had an advantage that no other player had . . ." It is true, Jack knew that Blair had turned in his orders, though the action might have been a sham to fool Jack. But this was an advantage conferred upon him by another player; players are always giving each other advantages; it's part of the game. But in 83AY, the GM gave a player an advantage, and that is not permitted. Moreover, the information was transmitted in 83AY without the players consent. Similarly, Bruce points to the fact that Bob Olsen took over the job of GMing Steve Arnawoodian's games while Steve was in Europe. Hence, he points out, that a GM can delegate his functions. But there is a vital difference. Woody did not delegate the GMing function to a player in the game, because Olsen was not a player in any of the games for which he was a substitute. If Olsen had been a player, the games would probably have been called Irregular. The problem wasn't that he delegated the function in 83AY per se, it was that he gave the job to a player.

Seventh, Linsey seeks to belittle the significance of one of these points: "The GM let it slip that a player was resigning. Potentially serious, and yes, it could have affected the game. But apparently it didn't -- and in light of the fact that the player stayed in the game, it really couldn't have." First off, in the version I was given, this was hardly a slip of the tongue. The player asked, the GM then made sure his orders were locked in, and then answered his question directly. But I think Bruce has it backwards. If the player had left the game, his argument would be a lot weaker. Bruce is not a player in 83AY so he is in no position to assert that this didn't affect the game -- and nor is the BNC. And if the information couldn't affect the game, then why did the player who learned it pass it on to someone else? The information strikes me as being quite valuable indeed. Tell me, Bruce, if you learned from the GM that Player A was going to resign from the game, would you rely on him? Would you want to ally with him? And if you wanted to discourage B from allying with A, would your line be, "Ally with me instead, because you cannot ally with A, he'll be leaving the game, and who knows who will replace him." The fact that a player has such a small commitment to the game that he is planning to resign is a valuable fact. The fact that the player didn't actually resign is not a mitigating factor. For those of you who disagree with that, consider the following situation: You send in orders to the GM. The GM shows these orders to another player. You subsequently change your orders. In terms of evaluating the GM's actions, does it really matter that you changed your orders? Does that take the GM off the hook? I don't think so . . .

I want to emphasize that the ruling of a game as Irregular is an administrative function. It says that there is a serious problem with how this game was run, that it was done outside the generally accepted norms. I believe that description is accurate. It is NOT accepted behavior for a GM to turn over part of his function to a player in the game. It is NOT accepted behavior for a GM to reveal a sensitive piece of information given to him by one player to another. I don't think there was any dishonesty involved, I just think the GM didn't understand what he was supposed to do. And the question of whether the game ought to be rated is up to the ratings-master. Traditionally, ratings-masters do not rate irregular games, but they are certainly free to do so if they like.

Mark

PS-

I don't think your comment about Bill Quinn came out quite like you intended it. Please

(Con'd next pg.)

RRR (Con'd)

keep in mind that it's at least possible that Bill Quinn would have made the exact same decision that Kathy did. Also, I am aware of no past case where a BNC has ever even reviewed an earlier finding of "Irregular", let alone reversed a decision made by a former BNC on this topic.

((Thanks for writing, Mark. I always enjoy hearing from you and reading your opinions and the reasons for them. I don't always agree with your "logic" at times; nor do I always look at things from your point of view. The behaviour you deem as "NOT accepted behavior" by the Postal DIP Hobby had absolutely NO effect on this game. It is really laughable to assume it did. However, by cooking all kinds of potential "frightening" situations up, You certainly are able to make it sound like this secret info was a vital element in this game. Oh well. It certainly sounds as if you are against what von Metzke, Brown, Linsey, and myself are all behind - that is, establishing some sort of Review Board for these (by your own admission) arbitrary BNC edicts. Sorry, but as it now stands, I am too intimidated by the nearly unlimited power of the BNC. The next BNC might feel that any game in which the telephone was used to conduct diplomacy is an Irregular game -- and who could stop him/her? No one. I noted with interest that Quinn has ruled Dennis Agosta's "anonymous standby" policy as Irregular; and that as a result Dennis may soon transfer his games and cease GMing. What about all those LIBERTERREAN games GMed by Jim Bumpas utilizing Jim's unique "phantom player" standby orders? In these games, Jim had a secret player send orders for every power and in the advent of an NMR, the "Phantom's" orders were used. Certainly these games must now be viewed as Irregular? And we're probably only talking about 20 or so games . . . No, the fundamental issue is that the "Irregular" tag should be as Conrad von Metzke states, "needs to be used very sparingly." And that we should never be ". . . particularly eager to 'irregularize' a game except for fairly massive, and open-and-shut, cases." Please see my earlier note about the remark concerning Bill Quinn agreeing with Kathy's decision. I would like to, and think I need to, reiterate that I really bear no hostility to Kathy, Dan, or Bill over this. I just disagree with what has happened here and wish to state my feelings about it. (My cartoon of Bill on pg.11 is supposed to be funny - I hope you share my (bizarre) sense of humor). Thanks, Mark, for explaining your position on this subject. - RB))

((Something in a related sort of vein, this is an excerpt from a letter from the Orphan Games Custodian, Jim Burgess, to the players in a game I'm GMing: 1984CH))

8/26

Dear 1984CH Player,

As generally envisioned, the U.S. Orphan Service's job is to prevent the loss of games when a zine is delayed or goes under completely. In that capacity, I was called in to deal with the publication delays of MURD'RING MINISTERS. Ron has been extremely cooperative, exhibiting both a willingness to move games if the players so desire and a willingness to put timely adjudication of the games ahead of the future of the zine. Thus, in the standard sense, the job of the USOS is finished. However, I have a complaint of a slightly different nature from one of your fellow players, Ben Schilling.

. . . There is a further complication (and this is the part of the issue that is not really the Orphan Service's domain) in that this game is now potentially irregular in the eyes of the BNC. The issues are rather complicated and I am not qualified to make a judgement, but you should be aware of the possible declaration of irregularity. The decision (made officially by Bill Quinn, the BNC) may or may not be affected by your decision on whether to move the game or not. I realize that this presents you with a difficult and uncertain decision but it is not my job to decide what you want, so I'm afraid I have to ask you for a decision.

Sincerely,

Jim Burgess

((I guess everyons but Ben wanted to keep the game with me becauss all players hava been ssnding me orders and I've continued to adjudicats them. Ths think that mads me raiss my syebrows about this lster from ths Orphan Gamee Custodian, was the remarks concerning the irregularity of this game. There have besn no charges made publicly that anything about this game should be irregular. Yst, Ben ap- parently told Jim that if he didn't move the game elsewhere, hs would make sur the BNC declared the game irregular. With that in mind, Jim informs the players of 84CH, hey, you can let Ron kssp the gams or transfer it elsewhere. But, if you 1st Ron keep it there's a chancs it's Irregular. For some reason which I can't fathom, ths players decided to keep the game with me. Had I besn a player in such a situation I would have thought, "Well, ths GM is OK, but if he keeps it, it will be irregular. Transfer ths game." Now, I say that there is no reason for the BNC to declare 84CH irregular. But what if ths BNC looks over Ben's complaints and declares, "Ths game was delayed a few times, thus the GM interfered with the game. Mark it irregular." Hey, it wouldn't surprise me at all. Nothing anyone dreamed up which makee a game irregualr would surprise me any more! And maybe 1984 ie now "irregular" becauss ths Orphan Games Custodian implied it would be irregular if it stayed with me. I juet don't know any more. - RB))

* * * * *

MURD'RING MINISTERS STANDBY LIST

Regular DIPLOMACY - Dan Gorham, Jim Bumpas, Bill Hugh, Stan Johnson, Paul Gardner, and Ron Ksllly. Anyone want on or off ths list?

MACHIAVELLI - None! Anyone out thsre interested?

* * * * *

1982IT FINAL STATS AND ENDGAME STATEMENTS

1982IT MURD'RING MINISTERS (Ron Brown). Austria: Daniel Gorham (Out W'05); England: Jon Baldwin (Out W'05); France: Wylie Wilson; Germany: Jim Lahus (Drop F'03); Ron Ksllly (Out W'07); Italy: Holly Stowe (Resign S'05) Paul Gardner. Russia: Bill Hugh (WIN W'10); Turkey: Jself Albrecht.

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
@ A	4	4	2	1	0	X	X	X	X	X	
@ E	5	3	3	1	0	X	X	X	X	X	
@ F	5	5	5	7	7	8	7	7	5		
@ G	5	6	4	3	2	1	0	X	X	X	
@ I	4	4	6	6	5	6	6	6	7		
@ R	6	8	9	11	13	14	14	15	16	18	WINS!
@ T	4	4	5	5	6	6	6	6	5	4	

@ GM Comment: 1982IT was ths 19th game of regular DIPLOMACY in the pages of MM. This game is notable for eeveral things. First, it featured one of the rare female players to grace the pagee of MM in Holly Stowe. Shs unfortunately was forced to resign when some private mattere materialized. Bill Hugh's Russia was unusual in that

hie Mother Russia was abls xpand constantly and consistently throughout ths entire game. I havsn't seen too many games where Ruseia just continued swelling until it won outright. Bill Hugh is to be complimented greatly on his timely stabs and good game plan. I belisve this may be Bill's first postal win. Congratulations, Bill!!

((Con'd on next pg.))

* * * * *

"But men are men; the best sometimes forget."

OTHELLO, II, iii, 243.

1982IT (Con'd)

ITALY - Paul Gardner (Survived with 7 SC)

I'm afraid that I cannot add a lot to the story of this game. When I joined the game as a standby in '05 or '06, the tone of the game was already set. Russia was at 11 or 13 centers and Turkey (Jeff Albrecht) was working with him.

As a result it was immediately clear that the only choice for action was to accept Wylie Wilson's (France) proposals to join forces against R/T. In addition, we attempted from time to time to persuade Turkey to join us against Russia. Perhaps not enough energy was devoted to persuading Jeff; several times it was only last minute phone calls from Wylie that got any coordination to the Russian resistance. And in the end I believe it was Wylie who got Jeff to come around. At that point, we finally outnumbered Russia in units and I really thought we would succeed in stopping Russia and forcing a draw. It was not to be, Russia (Bill Hugh) was too well entrenched to stop and we didn't play quite perfectly enough.

RUSSIA - Bill Hugh (Won with 18 SC in 1910)

This savored win shall be remembered not for the win but for the guilt that I feel for stabbing a close friend. Please Jeff, accept my amends because a shared draw is more rewarding to me than a villain's sabre in a vulnerable situation to gain a victory. Maybe next time, I'll be on the receiving end of a pointed situation; as this game goes. Good luck and prosperity to you and yours in the future.

Mr. Wylie Wilson and cohorts - my hat is off to you guys for a defense that was hard fought until near the end. You guys lost the guessing game that allowed me to gain the key squares of Tya-Bur-Ruh-Hel. I hope to battle you'all again some time as it was a challenge.

Ron - How many guys entered the Superman Pool? Who gets paid?! Who was that masked man anyway?

* * * * *

INFLUENTIAL PLAYER RANKINGS
(Thru EVERYTHING#65)

Rank	Name	IPR	W&D	W	GS
1.	Dan Stafford	11.3	17	8	1
2.	Kathy Byrne	9.9	18	6	1
3.	Dave Carter	8.4	18	3	3
4.	Dick Martin	6.8	12	5	2
5.	Jack Masters	6.0	7	6	-
6.	Paul Rauterberg	5.8	11	3	12
7.	Blair Cusack	5.6	9	4	1
8.	Randolph Smyth	5.3	6	5	1
9.	Tom Ripper	5.1	8	4	-
10.	Al Pearson	4.5	7	3	9
	Ron Brown USA	4.5	6	4	-

This is a Calhamer-type rating system which awards pints (IPR's) to postal players for their wins and draws. Only those games completed in the last 4 years are rated - this update contains the game results from the BNC's zine EVERYTHING (#s50-65).

W&D = Wins and Draws

Win = 1.0

2-way draw = .5

3-way draw = .3

4-way draw = .2

5-way draw = .1

6-7-way draw = .0

GS = game starts in past 12 months

W = Wins

This rating system is devised and updated by Dan Stafford, 53 West 9th apt. E, Columbus, OH 43201.

STILL MORE STUFF (Con'd from pg. 2)

Well, I had a nice little article on the play of a country but it seems the double trouble of not enough space in this issue plus the unknown whereabouts of said article necessitates that it will wait until next time. . .

The ratings system on the previous page is one of two major current rating systems. Dan's IPR is perhaps the most publicized, appearing in EUROPA EXPRESS and other prominent widely read zines. The other system is called the "DragonsTooth Rating System" (DTRS). More on it later. A bit of commentary on the players of note listed on the IPR - Dan Stafford - the current "Dean" of postal DIPLOMACY. Dan has proven without a shadow of a doubt that he is the top DIP player in America. He is in a class by himself as a player. His record speaks for itself.

Kathy Byrne - an excellent player. One of the best players of Italy to ever have played. She combines a very shrewd understanding of the game with cunning diplomatic skills; you add her unique killer instinct and it all adds up to one of the best players ever, certainly the best female player by far the Hobby as ever been graced by. Dave Grabar gave Kathy her nickname which describes her relentless attacks: "Bloodsucker".

Dave Carter - A Canadian player, Dave has played in a large number of games in the past 6 years or so. Dave is very skillful in his diplomacy. An excellent player.

Dick Martin - Long time friend Dick Martin has steadily climbed the ranks in the ratings and now is certainly in a class of players in the ratings where he deserves to be. Dick is a pretty calm and laid-back individual (most of the time). I've never been in a game with Dick although we have both GMed games the other was a player.in. Dick has published quite heavily - his RETALIATIONS were massive in its heyday. Also published HOUSE OF LORDS, a hobby service zine for publishers/GMs only. Dick also served as Orphan Games Custodian for quite awhile. A Hobby stalwart.

Jack Masters - What can you say about Black Jack? Jack in his prime was as good a player of this game as ever existed. Jack's record was so good, that after he dropped from the Hobby suddenly in 1981, he has still remained at or near the very top of all the ratings systems! One of the best ever.

Paul Rauterberg - I'm just now getting a chance to play in a game with Paul (after all this time), in the new game called "The Delirious Dik-Dik" in COSTAGUANA. He is climbing rapidly in the ratings. It is interesting to note that Paul has more game starts in the past 12 months than anyone on the IPR list. (James Wall ties him with 12). In other words, you can expect Paul to continue to rise in the ratings.

Blair Cusack - About all I know about Blair is that he is a solid, established Canadian player.

Randolph Smyth - Also a Canadian, long time publisher Randolph Smyth is known for his reputation concerning his knowledge of tactics and of various keen insights into the game. Randolph ran the RUNESTONE POLL for a couple of years. An excellent player; right up there with the best.

Tom Ripper - Don't know Tom at all.

Al Pearson - One of the best people in DIPdom. Al published for quite awhile the excellent JUST AMONG FRIENDS and is noted for winning the very first NIXON AWARE. Uncle Al the Novice's Pal is apparently finding more time for gaming as he is rising again in the ratings. Al has started 9 games in the past year - an impressive number. Don't be surprised if you see Uncle Al crack the top 5 before long.

Ron Brown (USA) - It's a farce to have this guy among such company. He always tells the truth and never lies. Always tells the victim before he stabs him (usually ineffectively). A real loser.

YET STILL MORE STUFF

The other prominent rating system is the DTRS. This rating system goes into much more detail than the IPR, listing 298 players as opposed to the IPR list of 40. Because of the different formulae involved, the two are quite different. But bot measure quality of play. For instance, Dan Stafford is the top player on both boards. Jack Masters is also right up there. There are a few noticeable differences too. Mark Barch is #4 on the DTRS list, but didn't crack the top 40 of the IPR. Three of the top 7 in the DTRS I've never heard of and they also are omitted from the IPR. Both are very interesting in their own right. DTRS is published quarterly in THE DRAGON'S LAIR, published by Stephen Wilcox, 5300 W. Gulf Bals #103, Houston, TX 77088 and is available for 50¢ an issue. If you're into ratings, it's well worth it!

The football season is at a close (finally). Our team had what must be considered a disappointing season. We had a very strong defensive unit; probably the best defense I've been able to put together on the field in my 6 years on the job. However, our offense was erratic and as a result, we lost two league games that we should have won. This left us in third place and out of the playoffs. The team which represented our league as the 2nd place team lost to us 21-7. All in all, though it was a good season with at least having a winning record at 6-4. Better luck next year . . .

What do you guys think about Col. Khadafy? It's too bad the world (i.e. NATO) hasn't had enough at this point in time. How many more massacres must take place before some action is taken? I'd like to see our European-allies get together with us and try to deal with the course of these international murdering terrorists. I'll bet if each NATO allied nation (whose native soil has been the setting for most of these acts of barbarity) would contribute its best battle-ready division of infantry Ronnie Reagan could be persuaded to foot the bill for the whole thing. Khadafy and his band of pirates are descendants of previous pirates. The Barbary Coast pirates were dealt with in the most effective manner over a hundred years ago by military forces from the U.S. I think Khadafy has about come to the point where he should be dealt with similarly.

Heard on the radio here recently -- these two guys are doing a news broadcast and discussing the Khadafy-Libya situation. The straight man giving the report states, "Libya today accused the United States of massing 30 warships just off the Libyan coast. A Defense Department Spokesman stated in reply, 'That's impossible;" at which point the second newscaster pipes in with, "Yeah, they wouldn't fit!" (Hah)

There are sure a lot of conventions coming up this year. ORCCON will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel, Feb. 15-17th. They always sponsor a DIPLOMACY tournament; I may just talk a few friends around here into going to this one this year. We're all about due for a convention. The con will also have role-playing tournaments, war games, seminars, and an auction. Write for more info to ORCCON, PO Box 8399, Long Beach, CA 90808 or phone (213) 420-3675.

Had a Napoleonics battle not too long ago with Tim Luken, our friend who has French and Wurttemburg units. I recently concluded a trade with Mike Coburn whereby I sent some French units to him in return for some British units. Then I traded some with Tim and got his Highlanders; so now I find myself with all the British units! So Tim and I played - Me with the Brits and Tim with Wurttemburg and a few French. We played it over two days and it turned out to be one of the most exciting fights we've had. It was a very close battle, but Tim got the best of it (barely)! I'll be looking forward to seeing what kind of Napoleonics are played at Orcon this year. I'll bet EMPIRE is the mainstay. We'll see . . .

WRAP-UP

That's it for this one, sports fans. Hope you found it worthwhile. I will expect you to publish a regular sized 12 page issue around Valentine's Day, probably about the 10th or so. Therefore, we'll extend the deadline for the NIXON AWARD nominations to Feb. 10th, 1986. Publishers, please note. NOTE ALL GAME PLAYERS: You have a short 3 week deadline this time, please get those orders in early. THAT'S IN VERY EARLY!! JAN. 30th is the deadline for all games. You may be wondering about the location/whereabouts of 1983AY. So have I. Mike is over 2 months late with his game report. Mike has been reluctant to discuss the situation with me. He hasn't said much about the "Irregular" designation of 1983AY to me, but I can tell he's not very happy about it (understatement). I know that some of the other players are rapidly losing patience with the GMing situation, however, and I will ask Mike to please either keep his deadlines (within a reasonable period of, say, 2 weeks) from now on or abandon the game and have it transferred to another home. I'll try and see what he wants to do. Please stand by. Please get those NIXON nominations in as soon as possible, and remember the early deadline. In the next issue we'll feature a good old time ZINE REVIEW and the announcement of the NIXON AWARD Winner. Publishers who are working a "Partial-Trade" agreement with me please send me a copy of your most recent issue. Thanks! Well, be talking to you again real soon. Bye!

again real soon. Bye!
Hi Larry - See your latest ad on
pg. 11 - Hi! Best,
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